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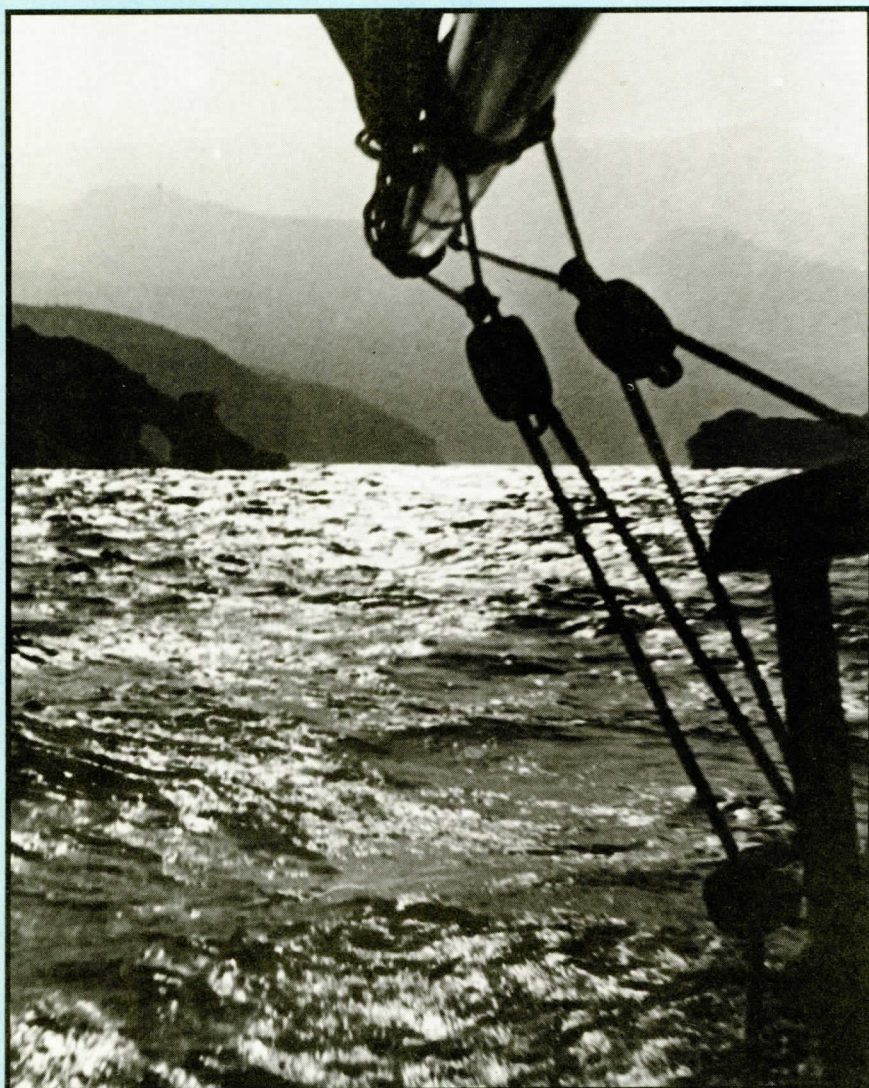
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE SANTA BARBARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Islands  
Remembered

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## The Santa Barbara Historical Society Flag

By Carey Stanton as told to Marla Daily

*Dr. Stanton, a former trustee of the Historical Society, made his home on Santa Cruz Island from 1957 until his death in 1987. Marla Daily is president of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation and is author of the book, California's Channel Islands.*

**MARLA DAILY:** Dr. Stanton, yesterday, July 18, 1987, the Historical Society conducted a trip to your ranch on Santa Cruz Island. At that time, you presented to them a newly designed flag. How did you come to this idea of a flag for the Historical Society?

**DR. STANTON:** I am a relatively new trustee at the Society and it came to my attention that we did not have a flag. Now the general concept in Santa Barbara is to emphasize the Hispanic aspect of its history. This is true in flags where you see a lot of influence from Castile in Spain and from Mexico. My idea was to go even farther back than that, to the story of Saint Barbara, from whom the town got its name.

Now, Saint Barbara had nothing to do with Spain or Mexico. She was born in Nicodemia in Asia Minor in 218 A.D. She was a great beauty and her father, a Roman officer, built a tower for her, where she could receive suitors under proper conditions. Barbara insisted on having three windows in the tower. When her father asked why that particular number, she admitted that the windows represented the Holy Trinity. Her pagan father denounced her to the Romans and then, in his rage, cut her down with his sword. He was then himself cut down by a lightning bolt. She thus came to be known as the patron saint of miners,



*The Society flag on Santa Cruz. It now flies daily above the Covarrubias adobe.*

masons, gunners, etc., and as a protection against lightning.

Although not an official saint of the Catholic Church, Santa Barbara is named after her. So I went to Paul Mills, who is a well-known vexillologist in Santa Barbara and former director of the Museum of Art. He thought the idea of a Society flag wonderful. We decided to do a very simple, stylized flag. In the center of the flag is the tower, with the three windows showing at the top. At the top and bottom of the flag are jagged bolts of lightning, colored white, to signify her virginity. The background is red, the color of martyrdom. That is the extent of the flag I gave to the Historical Society.

Justin Ruhge's latest book is *Gunpowder and Canvas: The History of Maritime Influence on the Central Coast of California*. Heavily illustrated, it covers the period 1542-1850 and includes new material on the Goleta cannons.